United Nations ECE/CES/2014/8/Add.1

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
6 March 2014

English only

Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of European Statisticians

Sixty-second plenary session
Paris, 9-11 April 2014
Item 7 (b) of the provisional agenda
Outcomes of the in-depth reviews carried out by the Conference of European Statisticians Bureau

Outcome of the in depth review of entrepreneurship statistics

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Summary

This note provides information on the outcome of the in-depth review of entrepreneurship statistics, carried out by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians in October 2013.

The review summarised the international statistical activities in the area, identified issues and problems, and made recommendations on possible follow-up actions.

The in-depth review was based on a paper by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Eurostat. The updated in-depth review paper is available as document ECE/CES/2014/8.

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I. Introduction

1. Each year, the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) reviews selected statistical areas in depth. The purpose of the reviews is to improve coordination of statistical activities in the region of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), identify gaps or duplication of work, and address emerging issues. These reviews focus on strategic issues and highlight concerns of statistical offices of both a conceptual and coordinating nature.

2. The CES Bureau selected entrepreneurship statistics for an in-depth review at its meeting in February 2012. OECD and Eurostat volunteered to prepare the paper providing the basis for the review. The relatively new statistical topic of entrepreneurship was included by the Bureau in the classification of statistical activities only in 2010. It crosses the traditional boundaries of economic and social statistics, integrating data often from a range of different sources. It combines topics such as the demography and performance of businesses with the characteristics of individuals, households and societies.

II. In-depth review discussion and decision by the Bureau

3. The Bureau carried out the in-depth review in October 2013 based on a paper by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Eurostat. The updated version of the in-depth review paper is presented as document ECE/CES/2014/8. The conclusions and recommendations resulting from the in-depth review are presented in section V of this document.

4. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) Collection of entrepreneurship data can provide an impetus for improving the quality of business registers, especially in less developed statistical systems. This in turn has a positive effect on the quality of other economic statistics and national accounts. Following guidelines and good practices in business registers are essential for producing good entrepreneurship statistics;

(b) The data on entrepreneurship are often not comparable between countries. The OECD and Eurostat data sets can be used as sources for comparable data;

(c) There is a limit to harmonising entrepreneurship statistics between countries. Many determinants of entrepreneurship differ across countries, for example the legal basis, social and cultural aspects, market conditions, access to finance and knowledge, etc;

(d) The use of data from economic censuses for entrepreneurship statistics could be mentioned in the paper;

(e) It is extremely difficult to collect data on turnover of businesses and closed businesses while these data are of great interest;

(f) A Task Force on entrepreneurship statistics under the CES could be important to widen the scope of this work beyond EU and OECD countries;

(g) The need to ensure effective coordination between the existing Task Force on Statistical business registers, and the proposed Task Force on entrepreneurship was stressed.

5. As a conclusion, the Bureau asked the Task Force on statistical business registers to address in its work the issues related to business registers in the in-depth review paper.

6. The Bureau asked the secretariat in cooperation with OECD and Eurostat to draft a proposal for further work with concrete objectives and outcomes for the next Bureau meeting in January 2014. The on-going work in entrepreneurship statistics and related areas should be taken into account in the proposal.

III. Follow-up discussion by the Bureau

7. The Bureau discussed follow-up to the in-depth review of entrepreneurship statistics in January 2014. The following issues were raised in the discussion:

(a) The in-depth review contributed to a renewed momentum in entrepreneurship statistics. Issues related to entrepreneurship are currently tackled by the CES Task Force on Statistical Business Registers and the joint Eurostat/OECD Entrepreneurship Indicators Programme (EIP). The next meeting of EIP in May 2014 will be open to non-EU/OECD member countries;

(b) The Bureau acknowledged the work of the Task Force on Statistical Business Registers as a model of effective inter-organizational collaboration, and noted that the upcoming guidelines on business registers will be critical for compiling comparable entrepreneurship statistics. The Task Force was encouraged to follow the outcomes of the EIP work related to entrepreneurship indicators;

(c) Concern of possible duplication of work among the groups working on business registers was raised, namely the Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers and the joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Expert Group on Business registers. There are synergies between the groups: they meet on alternate years and have a largely overlapping membership. The CES Task Force on Statistical Business Registers was considered to have a clear mandate with concrete expected outcomes (the group will be closed after submitting the Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers to the CES plenary session for approval in 2015).

8. As a conclusion, the Bureau asked Eurostat and OECD to prepare, in collaboration with the Secretariat, a proposal for possible future activities on entrepreneurship statistics, taking into account the outcome of the meeting of the Eurostat/OECD Entrepreneurship Indicators Programme in May 2014. The Secretariat will clarify the mandate and the role of the Wiesbaden Group in consultation with the current chair of the Steering Group of the Wiesbaden Group and the UN Statistics Division in New York since the group reports to the UNSC. The Bureau will come back to the issue in October 2014.

IV. Proposal for the Conference

9. The Conference of European Statisticians is invited to endorse the outcome of the in-depth review of entrepreneurship statistics, and take note of the updated in-depth review paper (ECE/CES/2014/8).